

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

Heated air distribution system 20 in accordance with one embodiment of this invention as shown in Fig. 2 comprises two spaced apart pairs of spaced apart first and second heated air distribution plenums 30, 31 and 32, 33. Between the spaced apart pairs of spaced apart heated air distribution plenums is formed a return air conduit 24 having a return air outlet 25 in fluid communication with air plenum 14, which return air conduit 24 comprises sidewalls 54, 55 extending between the two spaced apart pairs of spaced apart heated air distribution plenums 30, 31 and 32, 33, as shown in Figs. 3 and 9. Each of the heated air distribution plenums 30, 31, 32 and 33 comprises a substantially horizontally oriented, heated air distribution plate 49, 50, 51 and 52, each of which heated air distribution plates is disposed on the side of the heated air distribution plenum facing the opposed heated air distribution plenum of the corresponding pair of spaced apart heated air distribution plenums. That is, heated air distribution plate 49 of the top lower conveyor heated air distribution plenum 32 is oriented to face heated air distribution plate 50 of the bottom lower conveyor heated air distribution plenum 33. Each heated air distribution plate 65, as shown in Figs. 7 and 8, forms a plurality of heated air distribution openings 66 through which heated air, indicated by arrows 70, as shown in Fig. 2, introduced into heated air distribution

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plenums 30, 31, 32 and 33 through heated air distribution plenum inlet openings 35, 36, 37 and 38, respectively, as shown in Fig. 4, is distributed, as indicated by arrows 71, onto a food product disposed on conveyors 53 disposed between the heated air distribution plenums of each pair of spaced apart heated air distribution plenums. Disposed between the heated air distribution plenum inlet openings of each pair of openings 35, 36 and 37, 38 is a flow diverter 40 having an arcuate profile whereby heated air from blowers 18, 19 is split between the heated air distribution plenums of each spaced apart pair of heated air distribution plenums 30, 31 and 32, 33. The heated air is then returned through return air conduit 24 as indicated by arrows 72 to air plenum 14. In accordance with one preferred embodiment of this invention, each heated air distribution plenum, 30, 31, 32 and 33 is vertically tapered, with the widest portion oriented toward air supply plenum 14.

Please replace paragraph [0023] with the following amended paragraph:

More particularly, return air conduit 24 conveys air from the front wall 11 of the heating space at the corners of the return air conduit 24 into air plenum 14 such that the air is diffused horizontally to the full width of air plenum 14 and the full height of the vertical distance between the spaced apart pairs of spaced apart heated air distribution plenums 30, 31 and 32, 33. The return air enters return air conduit 24

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through return air inlet openings 56, 57, 58 and 59 disposed at the corners of return air conduit 24 proximate front wall 11 as shown in Figs. 3 and 9. To reduce airflow resistance of return air into return air conduit 24, as compared to conventional systems, the ends of sidewalls 54, 55 disposed proximate front wall 11 are provided with inwardly oriented convex profiles 80, 81, as shown in Fig. 9. Hot spots in the air ~~supply~~ plenum occur if parts of the burner tube 34 are not cooled due to a lack of air velocity over those parts of the burner tube. Such hot spots create cooking non-uniformities and non-uniform aerodynamics at the blower inlets, reducing blower efficiency. The return air conduit 24, with its sidewalls serving to diffuse air to the full width of the air plenum 14, eliminates stagnant spots therein, thereby reducing poor inlet characteristics for the blowers.

Please replace paragraph [0025] with the following amended paragraph:

Disposed adjacent to the outer walls of the top upper heated air distribution plenum 30 and the bottom lower heated air distribution plenum 33 are secondary air return conduits 41, 42, 43 and 44, as shown in Fig. 4, having an opening 75, as shown in Fig. 3, through which a portion of the heated air from between each pair of heated air distribution plenums 30, 31 and 32, 33 is returned to air ~~supply~~ plenum 14. Secondary return air from secondary air return conduits 41, 42, 43 and

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44 forms air jets upon entering air plenum 14, which impact against the blower box back wall 15, creating rotary air patterns that are superimposed on the substantially horizontal flow of return air flowing into air plenum 14 from return air conduit 24, causing the air to be blown back across burner tube 34 to be heated before entering the blower inlets. The blower inlets are disposed at approximately the same height as burner tube 34 so that undesirable inlet effects that can reduce airflow and efficiency are minimized.